



THOUGHTS FOR SUNDAY
CHRISTMAS I
27 DECEMBER 2020

Christmas 2020

Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:15-21

I hope that we are all keeping Christmas in a way appropriate to this plague time! Many this year have suffered great loss – death of a loved one, loss of health, loss of work, loss of financial security, loss of human contact. Despite what the Christmas season may have become in ‘normal’ times, surely its essential message is directly to such desperate times as these, through which we are living?

In material and social terms, Palestine, under harsh Roman rule, was not a good place to be born, but the events of the first Christmas that we celebrate at this season were not prompted to address that particular imperial problem, but the far more fundamental one of the dis-ease between humans and God, or, as S. Paul says, the even more fundamental one of the dis-ease between the whole creation and God. Harsh Roman rule was but one manifestation of the multitude of horrid things abroad in the world, and that empire, like so many since then have come and gone, leaving the dis-ease an all too present reality. The seeming inability of people to live peaceably with one-another has polluted every generation since, sometimes, in some places, more, in other places, at other times, less, but never far from the surface of life.

Into this disordered world Jesus is born, in grim circumstances. Angels tell a bunch of miserable shepherds about it – they go and look and then ‘make known’ what they had heard and seen – and all who heard them were ‘amazed’, whilst Jesus’ mother treasured these things and pondered on them.

So, what have you heard? What have you seen? On what are you pondering? – A story of an unpropitious birth, long ago, in an obscure, remote part of the world, attended by a group of disreputable shepherds?

Or are you pondering on God’s decisive breaking into creation’s history with the pledge of restoration – a banishing of dis-ease – a binding up of wounds and a drying of tearful eyes, so that we might not only call God, “Father”, but really mean it – seeing ourselves as truly being part of his family?

Clive Lemmon